

Developing, Sharing and Delivering Smallholder RadioAgInfo Content

Executive Summary

Concept: Programming partnerships will be developed with existing community radio systems. Agricultural personnel from nearby agricultural institutions (e.g. higher education, governmental agencies, extension models, etc.), both faculty and students, will be recruited to participate in the development of content in a variety of formats and lengths from 30 seconds to 1 hour radio programs focused on community agricultural needs. The program content will be archived in English or other base languages in addition to being presented in the dominant local languages. This RadioAgInfo bank will be available to share across countries and regions. Programs will use a variety of formats including story-telling and “call-in” radio to allow local smallholder farmers to interact with the information using a variety of technologies and survey techniques and request specific program content. Archived programs will become part of the larger agricultural information system.

RadioAgInfo will typically not build or operate community radio stations, but be a content provider which also offers evaluative support for its delivery and use.

Audio brochures or flyers will be a major product. These topical brochures, audio versions of historic extension materials, can be delivered by radio, MP3 audio device, cell phone, or podcast. One program thrust will be the semi-automated translation of audio brochures into local languages possibly using machine translation, augmented by edits of agricultural students recruited as radio readers in local languages.

In addition, agricultural content, based on a modularized curriculum, will also be used to feed multi-media content into the formal agricultural training system.

Evidence the project can be successful:

There are many successful community radio stations in South Asia and Africa. Many smallholder farmers in our WorldAgInfo Village Surveys reported radio as their prime source of information. Experimental efforts are already underway in the use of MP3 audio and video devices.

3) Expected benefits of the project:

As the RadioAgInfo content bank becomes well developed it will be easier for community radio stations to access up to date agricultural content which will be open source, and easily adaptable to use as individual stations see fit. The development of audio brochures will provide agricultural faculty and students with ready made opportunities for clinical practice. Extensive formative evaluation

efforts will allow for the rapid improvement of both content and delivery support systems.

Sustainability and scale:

RadioAgInfo content banks may be housed in Agricultural Universities and become a standard feature of their training and clinical practice. Corporate support may be available in the sponsorship of audio brochures with promotional “tags” to advertise their products. User fees may become an option with call-in audio data banks.

4) Projected costs of the project.

RadioAgInfo infrastructure development for program content generation, institutional relationships, feasibility studies, translation, and university and extension interface.

Translation protocols

Experimentation with alternative delivery systems

Exploration of synergies with other institutions and systems

Extensive formative evaluation efforts, including the development of evaluation protocols and instrumentation and longitudinal analysis

5) Measures of success.

The extent of use of content materials generated and usership “ratings” (RadioAgInfo may develop a proxy for “Nielson-like” ratings of community radio listenership. Analysis of macro agricultural production and environmental health data for areas served and not served by extensive RadioAgInfo programming.

6) Risks:

It may be difficult to get the cooperation of agricultural universities in making RadioAgInfo content development a regular part of their curriculum. Community radio stations are often expecting to be paid for airing of content and the idea of brief, agriculture public service announcements may be a difficult concept to “sell.” Developing a social networking mentality for community radio stations across regions and national boundaries may not succeed.

References